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Conference Statement
Third Asia Pacific Conference on East Timor
March 6, 1998
Bangkok, Thailand

PREAMEBLE

WE the Participants of the Third Asia Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET M) and the International Symposium on Peaceful Settlement for East Timor (PEACESET) gather as academics, as parliamentarians and as advocates for peace and human rights. We gather as members of the Asia Pacific community to discuss peace in East Timor, to identify strategies and actions so that civil societies and social movements around the world will support the East Timor peace process.

Recognizing the long suffering of the people of East Timor since the invasion by military forces of the Suharto regime in 1975, including mass murder, famine and systematic abuse of basic human rights, and the escalation of pressure on the people of East Timor in the current c@ of political and economic turmoil in Indonesia;

Recognizing also the long suffering of the people of Indonesia under the Suharto regime, especially in the current political and economic turmoil and the solidarity of the people of East Timor with the movement for democracy within Indonesia;

Recognizing that a just comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor cannot be achieved without the active participation of the representatives of the people of East Timor, in particular the excluded leaders of the East Timorese resistance;

Recognizing the essential contribution of East Timorese women and youth to the ongoing struggle of the people of East Timor for self determination;

Asserting the central importance of democratic values and human rights and dignity of peoples across our region;

Encouraged by the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan, his special representative Mr. Jamsheed Marker, the Government of Portugal and President Nelson Mandela in their initiatives for peace in East Timor;

Encouraged by the progress of United Nations initiatives to achieve self-determination for the people of western Sahara through a forthcoming referendum;

We the Participants of the Third Asia Pacific Conference on East Timor and th e International Symposium on Peaceful Settlement for East Timor

Applaud the outstanding efforts of the East Timorese leadership, especially Xanana Gusmao and the Nobel Peace Laureates Jose Ramos Horta and Bishop Carlos Ximenes Filipe Belo to secure peace for their people; Remember with affection and admiration the late Bishop Aloysius Nobuo Soma of Japan, a great leader of our region for peace in East Timor;

Note the significant achievement of holding these conferences in the influential ASEAN nation of Thailand;

Note with distress the suppression and disruption of open participation by intense surveillance and restrictions imposed by government authorities, and regret in particular the severe limitations this has placed upon the participation in PEACESET and APCET III of Timorese and Indonesian participants;

Congratulate the Thai Working Committee for organising and facilitating of PEACESET and APCET III in difficult circumstances, and all supporting organisations.

And make the following Resolutions

1 . We reaffirm the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self determination.

2. We endorse and support all efforts to advance the peace process for East Timor, and commend the Peace Plan of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) as a just reasonable and workable model for a stage by stage peace process for East Timor.

3. We stress the need for the people of East Timor and their recognized leaders, in particular the excluded leaders of the resistance, to be actively involved at all levels in the process of seeking a peaceful settlement in East Timor.

4. We offer solider* to the people of Indonesia suffering under the Suharto regime and the current political and economic turmoil and support their struggle for democracy.

5. We call on the United Nations and its appropriate agencies and officers to -
(a) establish a working committee of United Nations and related agencies to prepare the foundation for the self determination of the people of East Timor,
(b) establish a permanent office of the United Nations Commission for Human Rights in M East Timor;
(c) extend the terms of reference of the All Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue (AIETD) to allow East Timorese participants to discuss the political status of East Timor;
(d) extend the United Nations supervised Portugal-Indonesia governmental talks on East Timor to include the recognized leaders of the East Timorese people;
(e) send a team of Special Rapporteurs relating to various disciplines to East Timor to ascertain details of the suffering and human rights abuses of the people of East Timor;
(f) direct immediate United Nations action to ascertain the extent of drought and famine in East Timor to include and provide necessary humanitarian assistance.

6. We call upon the Suharto regime of Indonesia to -
(a) accept the offer of the East Timorese leadership to undertake negotiations without preconditions to achieve a peaceful settlement in East Timor,
(b) release the leader of the East Timorese resistance Xanana Gumão and all other political prisoners as an act of good faith and a confidence building measure among involved parries;
(c) to cease all human rights abuses against the people of East Timor, including the systematic harassment of East Timorese students in Indonesia.

7. We condemn the Suharto regime for its intimidation of East Timorese citizens, in particular those seeking asylum in foreign embassies in Jakarta, and urge the Australian Government and its Jakarta embassy not to succumb to such pressure in the current protection of East Timorese citizens.

8. We protest the recent death sentence passed by the Suharto regime upon two East Timorese political prisoners and call for its immediate reversal.

9. We call upon the governments of the ASEAN nations to support the peace process in East Timor, be with diplomatic and financial support for the AIETD.

10. We call for an immediate end to any and all forms of military support for the Suharto regime. We demand that the governments of the world stop the export of military goods, technology and training cease issuing or honouring export permits for military material and refuse to participate in joint military exercises.

11 We affirm the need to support the people of East Timor in their efforts to develop institutions and practices of democracy and civil society in East Timor as a foundation for lasting peace and equitable development. We call upon relevant international organisations and agencies and the peoples of the world to offer educational logistical and financial and expert contribution to the process.